

April 22, 2003

By Electronic Filing

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Ex Parte Submission in CC Docket 95-116

Dear Secretary Dortch:

On Thursday, April 17, 2003, John Jones, Guy Miller and I, all of CenturyTel, Inc. ("CenturyTel"), had a meeting with the following individuals at the Commission concerning the Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association (CTIA) Petition for Declaratory Ruling in the above-captioned docket:

Wireless Telecommunications Bureau: Jennifer Thomchin, Jared Carlson,
Stacy Jordan, Joseph Levin, Peter Trachtenberg

CenturyTel made the following points at the meeting:

In their Petition, CTIA attempts to argue that porting's only purpose is to encourage competition among providers and, since competition exists among wireless carriers, porting is not necessary. This is a misleading argument. Porting is really about consumer choice, not about opening up competition, as CTIA alleges. As a wireless consumer, I believe that I "own" the number. I publish my wireless number in many venues – advertising, business cards, mailings, etc. It is costly and harmful to my business and burdensome to me personally to have to change that number should I desire to change carriers. As a wireless consumer, I should have the freedom to retain the number that everyone knows belongs to me and to pick and use the provider that best meets my cost and service needs. Absent porting, I am held hostage to my original provider and unable to affect such a change to a competitive plan without harm.

The cost concerns raised by CTIA are spurious at best. The cost to port wireline numbers was not a roadblock to the order that implemented porting for wireline carriers. Wireless porting is no different than wireline porting from a cost standpoint and it is not in the public interest to let wireless providers argue their way out of the same costs that were mandated to wireline providers. For these reasons, CenturyTel urges the Commission to go forward with wireless number portability.

Porting from wireline to wireless, however, is not in the public's best interest at this point in time. In today's world, wireless consumers are protected from telemarketing and other junk calls because the specific wireless NXXs are identified as such and are not input into the telemarketer dialers. If you allow porting of a wireline number to wireless carriers, this protection goes away. The wireless phone then becomes the receiver of countless incoming sales calls, with consumers now bearing the burden of a per-minute cost. Any attempt to use the "do

not call” argument to justify wireline to wireless porting is not well founded. Some calls still come through on DNC numbers – local businesses, charities, etc. are not always included in the DNC scheme, so there will still be junk calls that the consumer will be charged for.

Nor is the use of Caller ID a valid argument for preventing junk calls. Calls originating in many business PBXs, shared tenant systems and other non-automatic dialer situations, such as a spouse calling home or a friend or relative calling with news, frequently appear as unknown or out of area on Caller ID. In addition, those local businesses and charities who make solicitation calls may appear as just a local number which would fool a consumer into thinking that it is a personal call from a infrequently calling neighbor, a business associate, an expected service call from a business or any of a number of other types of local calls that the consumer is awaiting or otherwise might wish to answer.

For the reasons cited above, CenturyTel urges the Commission to deny the CTIA request that wireline carriers must provide portability to wireless carriers operating within their service area until the issue of charging consumers for incoming junk calls can be legally or technically resolved.

Please direct any questions concerning this matter to me (318-330-6252) or John Jones (318-362-1583).

Very truly yours,

Robert Shannon

cc: Jennifer Thomchin
Jared Carlson
Stacy Jordan
Joseph Levin
Peter Trachtenberg